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Talking Points
for the DDCI
(25 August 1983)

Current Situation in Lebanon

Lebanese sectarian leaders are gearing up for increased factional fighting once the Israelis withdraw from the Shuf and Alayh districts.

- Israel has agreed not to start pulling back until Tuesday night to give President Gemayel more time to arrange a reconciliation meeting with Druze leader Junblatt. []

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Junblatt has told our Ambassador in Damascus that he is willing to travel to Paris this weekend to meet with Special Envoy McFarlane and Lebanese Government officials.

- The mercurial Junblatt, however, is notorious for changing his mind at the last minute.
- He may still be in Damascus, and the Syrians could convince him not to meet with the Lebanese.
- Even if a Druze/Lebanese Government agreement is reached, it will be very difficult to guarantee its implementation. []

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President Gemayel's domestic position continues to deteriorate, and there is the possibility that his political enemies may attempt to kill him or force him out of office. []
[] Gemayel has little influence over the Phalange-dominated Christian Lebanese Forces militia, which are battling the Druze for control of the Shuf and Alayh districts.

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- The Druze want the Lebanese Forces to reduce their presence in the Shuf and Alayh before agreeing to Lebanese Army deployment there.
- Phalange leader Pierre Gemayel said Thursday that the Lebanese Forces will pull out of the region, but Lebanese Forces commanders reportedly had been considering making such an announcement as a ploy. The militia leaders have plans to close down their barracks and secretly disperse their units to Christian villages in the region. []

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The Lebanese Army, under the command of General Tannous, is ill-prepared to fill in for the withdrawing Israelis, although Israeli/Lebanese Army coordination efforts have increased in recent weeks.

- The Army may split along factional lines if there is prolonged fighting in the Shuf and Alayh or if the factional strife spreads to the Beirut area.
- Tannous reportedly may decide against deploying the Army to the Shuf and Alayh if no political agreements are reached.

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